

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1201

By Naifeh

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of William R. Snodgrass,
Comptroller Emeritus of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were deeply saddened to learn of the death of William R. Snodgrass, who so ably served the good people of Tennessee as the Comptroller of the Treasury for forty-four years; and

WHEREAS, a public servant whose contributions will continue to loom large in Tennessee for generations yet to come, William R. Snodgrass was the voice of integrity in state government, respected not only statewide, but nationally by his peers; and

WHEREAS, William R. Snodgrass served the state of Tennessee for more than one quarter of its history, always working with diligence, energy, great ability and tremendous behind-the-scenes influence; his efforts on the public behalf merit his honored place in the pantheon of distinguished Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, a native Tennessean, Mr. Snodgrass was born September 15, 1922 in White County; he graduated from David Lipscomb College in Nashville in 1942, attended the University of Pennsylvania, received a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from the University of Tennessee in 1947, and subsequently engaged in graduate work at the University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, a member of this country's Greatest Generation, William Snodgrass proudly served in the United States Armed Forces from 1943 through 1946; and

WHEREAS, upon his return to civilian life, Mr. Snodgrass was appointed research assistant at the Bureau of Business Research at the University of Tennessee in 1947, and later worked as a consultant on municipal accounting and finance issues at the Municipal Technical Advisory Service, University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, in 1953, William R. Snodgrass was appointed Director of the Budget and Director of Local Finance by the young and progressive Governor Frank Clement; at 30 years of

age he was the youngest official in the Clement administration, and was endorsed by Governor Clement for election as Comptroller in January 1955, the first of 22 consecutive two-year terms he would serve in that office; and

WHEREAS, as Comptroller of the Treasury, William Snodgrass secured the passage of legislation that required audits of all governments in Tennessee long before other states enacted such progressive measures. He also initiated performance audits, and those early initiatives brought stability and accountability to state government agencies and the state's counties; and

WHEREAS, during his time as Comptroller, Mr. Snodgrass, with his top aides oversaw some 600 employees, half of whom were auditors; his office approved audits and contracts for approximately 240 municipalities, 217 utility districts, 139 cafeteria and school activity funds, and more than 300 not-for-profit organizations that received funds from the state of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the Comptroller's power of audit and contract approval has had an incalculable positive effect in the lives of the citizens of this State, and the due diligence and dedication instilled by Mr. Snodgrass into generations of state auditors will continue to provide untold benefits to generations of citizens yet to come; and

WHEREAS, in large part because of the General Assembly's trust and respect for Mr. Snodgrass' abilities, the Comptroller of the Treasury was made an ex officio member or otherwise a member of some 20 major state boards and commissions and some 15 other entities which affect a broad spectrum of state governmental activities; and

WHEREAS; during his tenure as Comptroller of the Treasury, Mr. Snodgrass was a member of the following boards and commissions: the State Building Commission, the State Capitol Commission, the Board of Claims, the Board of Equalization, the State Funding Board, the Tennessee State School Bond Authority, the Tennessee Local Development Authority, the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System, the Board of Standards, the Health Facilities Commission, the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation, the Publications Committee, the Public Records Commission, the Tennessee Housing Development Agency, the Wastewater Financing Board and the State Insurance Committee; and

WHEREAS, his membership on other entities included: the Local Education Insurance Committee, the Local Government Insurance Committee, the State Library and Archives Management Board, the Tennessee Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations, the Information Systems Council, the Tennessee Competitive Export Corporation, the State Trust of Tennessee Board of Directors, the Child Care Facilities Corporation, the Governor's Council on Health and Physical Fitness, Sports Festivals Incorporated, Utility Management Review Board, the Tennessee Commodity Producers Indemnity Corporation, the Workers Compensation Insurance Fund Board, the Council on Pensions and Insurance, the Higher Education Commission, the Task Force on Not-for-Profit Accountability, the Tennessee Baccalaureate Education System Trust, the Security for Public Deposit Task Force and the Tuition Guaranty Fund Board; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Snodgrass was an active participant in numerous professional organizations and state government associations, providing meritorious service to the Association of Government Accountants, National Conference of State Legislatures, Council of State Governments, Government Finance Officers' Association and National Association of State Auditors, Comptrollers and Treasurers; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to honors and accolades, William Snodgrass was the recipient of numerous awards, including the Outstanding Municipal Performance Audit Award from the Council on Municipal Performance, the Donald L. Scantlebury Memorial Award for Distinguished Leadership in Financial Management from the Joint Financial Improvement Program, the Distinguished Leadership Award from the Association of Government Accountants, and the Award for Excellence in Governmental Auditor Training Seminars from the Government Finance Officers Association; and

WHEREAS, perhaps one of Comptroller Snodgrass's greatest achievements was the role he played, along with his subordinates, in exercising the powers granted to the Office of the Comptroller of the Treasury in the area of state debt management, which eventually resulted in Tennessee obtaining a coveted AAA bond rating award from all three rating agencies for the first time in state history; and

WHEREAS, William R. Snodgrass' impact upon the whole of state government over the course of his career with respect to professionalism, order, stability and accountability cannot be overestimated; and

WHEREAS, easily the most influential man in Tennessee state government over the last half century, Mr. Snodgrass was renowned for a personal integrity, impeccable honesty, analytical ability and dedication to detail and hard work in the public interest that won him acclaim across this great State and from all corners of this great Nation; and

WHEREAS, declining to seek another term as Comptroller of the Treasury in 2000, Mr. Snodgrass was named Comptroller Emeritus by this body and was further honored by the dedication of the "William R. Snodgrass Tennessee Tower Building" at the corner of Seventh Avenue and Charlotte Avenue in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, William Snodgrass enjoyed the loving companionship of his beloved wife, Faye Birdwell Snodgrass, and was the proud father of three devoted children, Dr. Emily Bailey, S. Elizabeth Bailey, Esq., and William R. Snodgrass, Jr., and the loving grandfather of ten treasured grandchildren, Sara Monclus, Lalita Monclus, Ramachandra vanGils, Christian Saupe, Gabrielle Saupe, Alexandra Saupe, Simon Saupe, Taylor Snodgrass, Ryan Snodgrass, and Zach Jackson, and one blessed great grandchild, Jayden Monclus; and

WHEREAS, he is further survived by his brother and sister-in-law, Joe and Pat Snodgrass, three nephews, and a host of other family members, friends and admirers; and

WHEREAS, those members of the General Assembly who were privileged to have worked alongside Mr. Snodgrass will remember him as the perfect example of a person totally committed to the highest ideals of public service and as a true Tennessee treasure; and

WHEREAS, seldom do such men as William R. Snodgrass walk among us, and he leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being, whose unparalleled contributions to the government and citizens of Tennessee will never be surpassed; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of William R. Snodgrass, Comptroller Emeritus and a beloved son of Tennessee, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of William R. Snodgrass.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.